



Air Force News Archive

Bombers: A formidable weapon in fight against terrorism

*by Tech. Sgt. Tim Dougherty
Air Force Print News*

03/07/02 - **WASHINGTON** -- "It was a dark and stormy night" used to be a comforting situation for the enemy, but not anymore. Modernization, new technology and lessons learned from previous conflicts now allow Air Force bombers to reach out and touch someone anywhere on the planet in a matter of hours, day or night, and in all types of weather.

"The biggest change when you jump from Desert Storm to Kosovo to Afghanistan is the use of the Joint Direct Attack Munition. We now truly have a precision-guided munition that is day/night and all-weather," said Maj. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan III, director of operations and training, deputy chief of staff for air and space operations at the Pentagon.

Buchanan was recently selected to command Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia and Air Force and Space Expeditionary Task Force-Southwest Asia, a part of U.S. Central Command in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

He said that close-air support has traditionally been done by fighters because of its precise nature and because of the danger in dropping bombs in close proximity to friendly troops. However, in Afghanistan, "we have changed the rules," Buchanan said.

"In Kosovo, we took away the sanctuary of the night, but we didn't take away the sanctuary of the weather," Buchanan said. "Now, with radar systems, J-STARS, U-2s and other systems that can identify a target through the weather, and ground teams like we have in Afghanistan, we have the ability to hit them with precision through the weather.

"With the JDAM, we can hit precision targets from 35,000 to 40,000 feet, without seeing the target and with a very, very high success rate," he said.

More AF News

[USAF News](#)
[AF Link Plus](#)
[AF TV News](#)
[AF Press Releases](#)
[AF Radio News](#)
[Airman Magazine](#)
[Base Newspapers](#)
[E-mail subscription](#)
[Feedback](#)

Major Command

[Air Combat Command](#)
[Air Education and Training Command](#)
[Air Force Materiel Command](#)
[Air Mobility Command](#)
[Air Force Space Command](#)
[Air Force Personnel Center](#)
[Air Force Reserve](#)
[Air Force Special Operations Command](#)
[Air National Guard](#)
[DefenseLink News](#)
[US Air Forces in Europe](#)
[Pacific Air Forces](#)

Defense News

[DefenseLink News](#)
[Retiree News](#)

The bomber also brings lots of muscle to the fight because of its long loiter time above the target area and high payload.

"So now we're talking about 24 JDAMs or more as opposed to fighters going in with, at best, typically four JDAMs and not nearly as much loiter time," Buchanan said.

Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, is similarly impressed with bomber performance in Afghanistan. At a press conference in late November 2001, he told reporters the bombers have done "remarkably well."

"We've got wind-corrected munition dispensers that we put in over there from B-52 (Stratofortresses) at high altitude that have proven highly successful," Jumper said. "The Joint Direct Attack Munition that we saw off the B-2 (Spirit) in the Kosovo War, we're now dropping off of many platforms. The accuracy has proven to be, again, remarkably good and remarkably consistent."

Technology, guided munitions and advanced aircraft are only one side to the success of today's bomber. The ground teams can not be ignored.

"When you take a look at Afghanistan, the real heroes in my mind are the special tactics teams on the ground," Buchanan said. "Young, noncommissioned officers living with the Army and the Northern Alliance, traveling with them, riding on horseback, but at the same time, these guys are truly 21st-century warriors."

In Afghanistan, Buchanan said these combat controllers are playing a critical role as they identify targets and send targeting information to the bombers flying at 35,000 to 40,000 feet above their heads, in as little as 12 minutes.

"When you take a look at the conditions on the ground that those young troops are going through, it's pretty amazing. We couldn't do it without them," Buchanan said. "For Star Wars fans, it reminds me of storm troopers and what they envisioned the battlefield to look like. They are like Luke Skywalker on the ground using laser goggles and talking to fighters in space.

"If we have a way to identify a target, we can hit it. This allows us to have bombers doing close-air support and interdiction that they never would have been able to do in

the past,” Buchanan said.

“The use of the bomber in the global war on terrorism is critical,” Buchanan said. “If a terrorist cell is identified somewhere, in a matter of hours we can have an aircraft overhead with a JDAM precision weapon onboard that can reach out and touch them. This precision allows the United States to manage collateral damage.

“And from 40,000 feet,” Buchanan said, “they’ll never even know what happened until the bomb explodes.”

RELATED LINKS

[- Gen. John P. Jumper](#)
[- Maj. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan III](#)
[- Joint Direct Attack Munitions](#)

News Archive

2002: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)
2001: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)
2000: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)
1999: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)
1998: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)
1997: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)
1996: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)
1995: [Jan](#) [Feb](#) [Mar](#) [Apr](#) [May](#) [Jun](#) [Jul](#) [Aug](#) [Sep](#) [Oct](#) [Nov](#) [Dec](#)



Please read the security and privacy notice

[Top>](#)